NO RACISTS IN OUR NEIGHBOURHOODS

A Practical Guide
for Resisting
the Rise of Hate
and Intolerance

ANTIFASCISTE.INFO MONTRÉAL-

MONITORING AND CONFRONTING THE RESURGENCE OF THE FAR RIGHT

The far right in Québec has experienced rapid and sustained growth since the terrorist attack on the Centre culturel islamique in Sainte-Foy, on January 29, 2017.

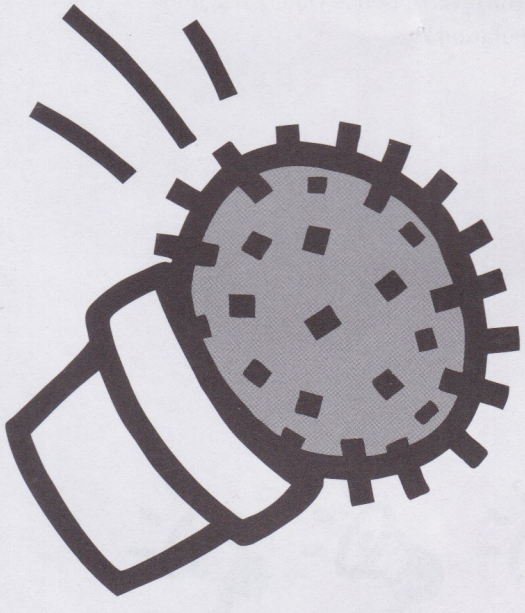
Taking advantage of the indifference of the police, the media, and politicians, far-right groups have been able to organize a steady stream of demonstrations against Syrian and Haitian refugees in Montréal and Québec City, as well as at the border. We have also witnessed a marked increase of the number of attacks against Muslims and mosques. The far right claims not to be racist, yet it unceasingly attacks Islam and immigration as if they were the source of all of Québec's problems.

This intolerance is part of a global rise in Islamophobia, racism, xenophobia, and violence against different minority groups, running the gamut from Indigenous peoples through trans and queer communities to Muslims and Jews. This escalation of the far-right compounds with already persistent systemic and state racism that are notably expressed in the level of police violence against racialized populations.

In the United States, the election of Donald Trump in November 2016 fueled this rapid growth, culminating in the far-right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, in August 2017, where white supremacists marched with torches, shouting "Jews will not replace us!" During this event, a neo-Nazi militant drove his car into an antifascist counter-demonstration, killing one counter-protester, Heather Heyer, and injuring nineteen others.

In Europe, this development is demonstrated by the Front national making it into the second round of the French presidential election in May 2017, or by the electoral breakthrough of the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) in Germany, or the Northern League in Italy. In the streets, openly neo-fascist groups like CasaPound in Italy and Bastion social in France organize "whites only" spaces and services under the logic of national preference or "Our people before others." This has been a source of inspiration for groups like the Soldiers of Odin and Atalante, which have adapted this model to Québec.

TO COUNTER THIS THREAT, WE MUST BE INFORMED, ORGANIZED, AND PREPARED TO RESPOND!



THE FAR RIGHT, FASCISM, POPULISM, ETC... DEFINING THE TERMS

The far right, fascism, populism, etc. all overlap and intermingle in ways that are not always clear.

Each of these words refers to something distinct, but related to one another. ***Populism focuses on the opposition between the "people" and an elite.*** This is not bad per se, and there are left-wing forms of populism. That said, all forms of populism glorify a leader (generally a man) who is perceived to embody the people, and who centralizes authority, while fanning the flames of social resentment. If we add the nationalist character of most contemporary expressions of populism, we end up with a national-populism that defines the "people" primarily in ethnic and racial terms, in opposition to "foreigners" and immigrants.

The far right takes this logic a step further by clearly adopting a radical nationalism with xenophobic, racist, sexist, homophobic, and transphobic overtones. The far right is made up of political parties that participate in elections alongside extra-parliamentary groups with a propensity for violence that are active on the streets. Whatever the variation, all of these groups share a hostility toward democracy, equality, "foreigners," cross-cultural mixing, and intellectuals.

Finally, ***fascism is a right-wing revolutionary current based on the use of violence, a cult of leadership (always patriarchal), hierarchy, and dreams of a militarized totalitarian society.*** It includes a strong social dimension and claims to incarnate the destiny of the "true people," which is defined in racial terms (this is the source of the term "national socialist," or its German abbreviation "Nazism").

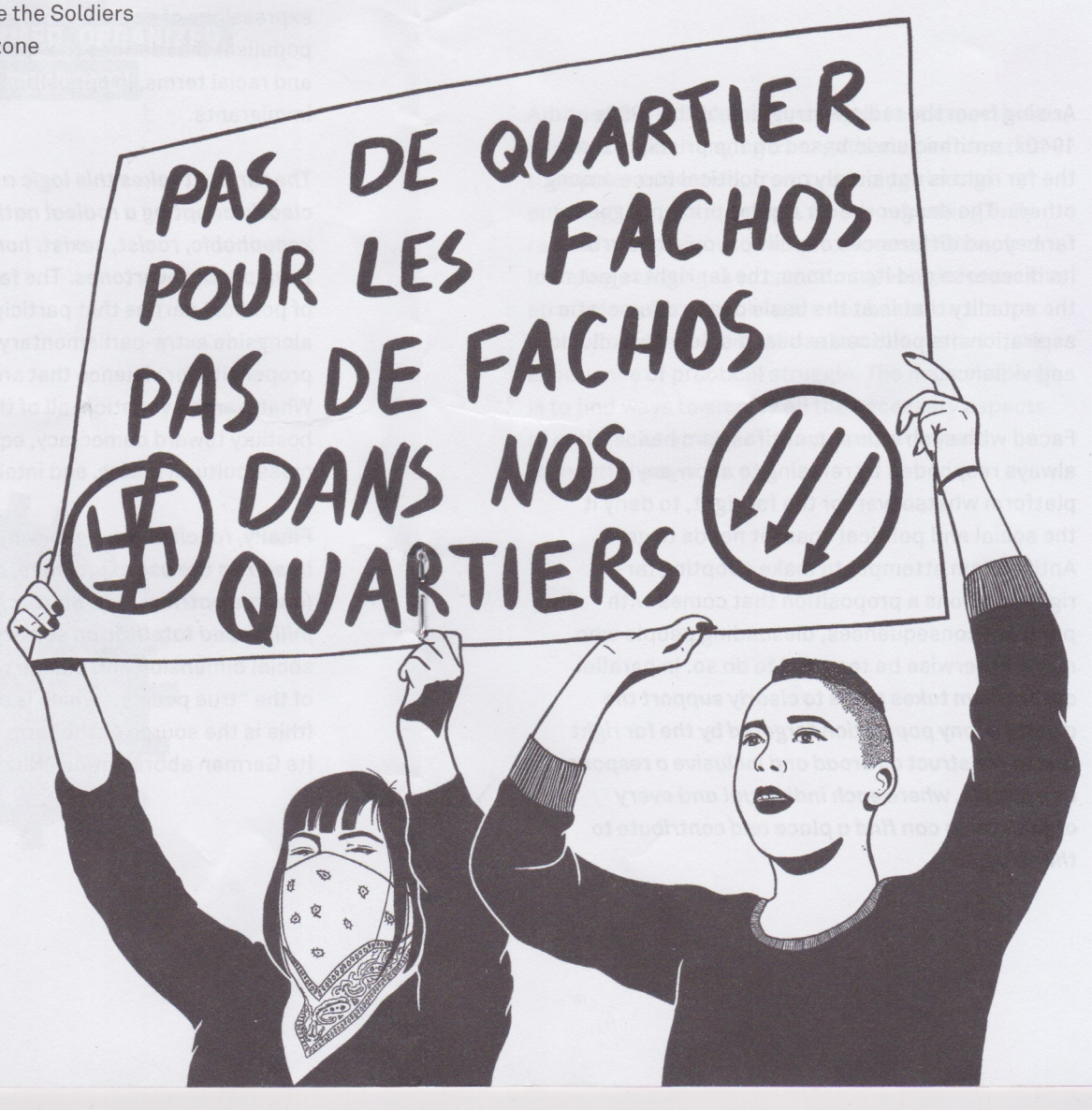
These various positions and groups are far from identical. Both your run of the mill racist schmo and a media pundit like Mathieu Bock-Côté can recognize themselves in a national-populist discourse or that of certain far-right currents without actually being outright fascists.

That being said, ***we don't believe that the antifascist struggle can be limited to avowedly fascist groups and movements.*** There is continuum between national-populism and fascism. That racist schmo and a neo-Nazi group like Atalante are at different points on the right-wing spectrum. The line that runs from banal daily racism through the xenophobic right to the more explicit fascist groups is one that allows for a lot of overlap. Sometimes this is informal (particularly on social media), and at other times it is official (shared membership), with the same people turning up in both tiny extremist groups and far-right parties of various stripes. There are also explicit sympathetic ties, for example, between a fair number of members of La Meute and Storm Alliance, on the one hand, and explicitly neo-fascist groups like the Fédération des Québécois de souche and Atalante, on the other. A group like the Soldiers of Odin exists in a gray zone between the two.

Among the issues that connect the national-populist right with neo-Nazi organizations is the racist and xenophobic myth of the "great replacement," which asserts that the majority white Christian population is on the cusp of being "replaced" by Muslims. This in spite of the fact that Muslims make up only 3.2 percent of the total population of Canada.

All of these groups contribute to a shift in the political debate that normalizes and legitimizes racist, xenophobic, Islamophobic, and at times antisemitic, misogynist, homophobic, and transphobic ideas. With time, this can lead to the acceptance of explicitly fascist propositions.

THIS IS WHY WE HAVE TO PREVENT THEM FROM GAINING THE PUBLIC PRESENCE THEY STRIVE FOR, BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY.



WHAT IS ANTIFASCISM?

Arising from the radical struggles of the 1930s and 1940s, antifascism is based on the principle that the far right is not simply one political force among others. The danger the far right represents goes far beyond differences of political opinion. In both its discourse and its actions, the far right rejects the equality that is at the basis of any democratic aspiration. Its politics are based solely on exclusion and violence.

Faced with such a threat, antifascism has always responded by refusing to allow any platform whatsoever for the far right, to deny it the social and political space it needs to grow. Antifascism attempts to make adopting far-right positions a proposition that comes with personal consequences, dissuading people who might otherwise be tempted to do so. In parallel, ***antifascism takes steps to clearly support the dignity of any population targeted by the far right and to construct as broad and inclusive a response as possible, where each individual and every organization can find a place and contribute to the struggle.***

Antifascism includes a diversity of tactics, activities, and strategies, ranging from gathering information to popular education, from producing zines to entering the public debate, from confronting daily racism to organizing counter-demonstrations, from lobbying campaigns to community self-defence. The strategies of antifascism are not based on abstract moral debates, but in political tactics rooted in the experience of practical struggle. The main challenge is to find ways to employ all the necessary aspects of antifascist struggle in complementary and respectful ways.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

EDUCATE YOURSELF:

Read, reflect, and discuss to be better armed to recognize racism and fascism in their myriad forms.

ACT ON A DAILY BASIS:

Talk to your family, friends, colleagues, etc. to make them aware of the threat posed by the far right. Use the many opportunities that arise every day to sensitize the people around you.

You can also confront racist and fascist positions when you encounter them in your daily life, by challenging them and expressing your solidarity with the people targeted. We must prevent the exclusionary racist and fascist discourse and practice from becoming normalized. However, when doing so, always keep in mind any risk to your security and that of those around you.

GET INVOLVED:

You can respond to callouts for mobilization, turn out to demonstrations, and get involved in other antifascist activities.

You can join the antifascist groups active in your neighbourhood or on your campus. You can form your own group with people you trust and coordinate with other groups to help build an antifascist front.

For more information, consult the Montréal Antifasciste website: montreal-antifasciste.info/en

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